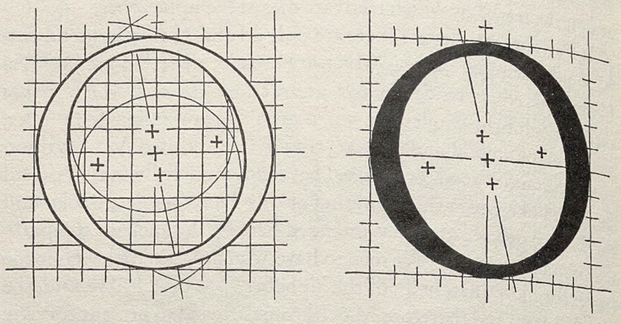

THE letter O here drawn within a square is as broad as it is high, and uniformly round on the outside. Within, it is curved in the shape of the bottom of a vat; that is, it is a little elliptical, making two of the sides a little longer, in which shape, within & without, the Coliseum at Rome was built long ago, as can still be seen by the ruins that remain. To make these two different curves, five centres are needed, which I have marked at the places where the point of the compass must be set. Its roundness, resting on the square, signifies all perfection, as I have said hereinbefore; and we have in our French tongue the phrase 'to speak roundly,' that is to say, to speak fully and concisely, comprising much meaning in few words. Which thing is peculiar to the Greeks & usual with them, & chiefly in the Laconian tongue, whereof Horace says in his *De Arte Poetica:*—

> Graijs ingenium, Graijs dedit, ore rotundo,
> Musa loqui.*

* *Verse* 323.

That is to say, that the Greeks have by nature a musical medium, which they speak and write roundly.

O Says Martianus Capella, *rotundi oris spiritu comparatur.* That is to say, 'O should be pronounced with a breath coming forth roundly from the mouth,' as its shape shows. O in Latin is sometimes short in quantity, and sometimes long, & both sounds are represented by the same written character. But in Greek there are *Omicron* & *Omega,* that is to say, O short, and O long, written in two different ways. *Omicron* is uniformly round on the outside, and the Latins stole it without

changing its shape. *Omega,* as a capital, is rounded above & open below. This, the true form of *Omega,* is not well observed by some persons who write and pronounce that passage of the XXI and penultimate chapter of the Apocalypse [Revelation], where it is said: *Ego sum Alpha et* Ω, in which passage, instead of *Omega,* which should be written Ω, they write O, a complete circle, which is an *Omicron;* and the sense requires that it be *Omega,* which is the last letter of the alphabet in Greek; for in that place it stands for the completion and end: *Ego sum Alpha et* Ω, it says; that is, 'I am the beginning and end of all good things,' said the Lord. *Omicron* does not signify the end, wherefore, then, it seems to me, humbly subject to correction, that we should better use Ω than O. And again, since Alpha is written at full length, I would fain know if it would not be well to write and say *Omega,* thus: *Ego sum Alpha et Omega.* Since Alpha is written in full, it seems to me most probable that *Omega* should be, also; or else that we should say and write, *Ego sum* A *et* Ω, so that A should neither be written nor pronounced in full, any more than Ω. It is not my purpose, however, to correct Holy Scripture, nor could I; but as a grammarian, and because my present design is to teach how to write and pronounce the letters of the Alphabet, I raise the point, to warn those who take pleasure in well-saying and well-doing, and who love clearness in all letters. In the Greek text of the Bible, there is, Εγω ειμι το α και το ω—just the simple letters A and Ω.

O in Greek, Latin, and French is a vocative adverb, which is pronounced by the Greeks with a circumflex accent & with a non-aspirated sound, which is called thin and sharp; but Aldus in his Latin books prints it in some places with an acute accent. In our French language we have no mark of accent in writing, and this because our language is not yet made subject to fixed rules, like the Hebrew, Greek, & Latin. I would that it might be so made, as could well be done. Example in Ω᾽ λυκοι ω^ θωεσ. And a little further on: Ω^ Παν Ραν. Example in Latin: Greek of Ω vocative: Theocritus in his first Eclogue called *Thyrsis*: Virgil in his first Eclogue:*—

* *Verse* 6.

> O᾽ Melibœe, Deus nobis hæc ocia fecit.

In French, as I have said, we do not write the accent over the O vocative, but we pronounce it, as when we say:

> O pain du Ciel angelique
> Tu es nostre salut vnique.

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